1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

The woman becomes interested in her husband's band or lineage and becomes a part of it only to the extent by which she enriches it with children. The more children she gives to the band the greater her interest in it, and reciprocally the greater the band's interest in her. The greater her authority and that of her natal family and band, the greater the parity between man and wife in the individual family. But at all times the husband's lineage is responsible for her welfare and answerable to her own lineage in default.

A hunting band may, under certain circumstances, welcome male outsiders (*Sippenfremd*) into the community; as, for example, when a wife cannot integrate herself into her new home and returns to her own band, her husband deciding to go with her. Children may in some cases be brought up in their mother's band. These outsiders occupy a position similar to that occupied by married women in their husbands' bands; they remain members of their

[1] In my own experience, among both archers and net hunters, patrilineal descent systems and patrilocality are no more than trends, most bands being effectively cognatic territorial units.

[P.176-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

All activities outside the camp cease at night, with the exception of termite hunting which is conducted at whatever time of the day or night termites are found to be swarming.

Conception and Childbirth

The normal course of daily life runs uninterrupted throughout the year, except when camp is moved, or on ceremonial occasions attendant on birth, puberty, marriage, and death. Of these occasions, it seems from Schebesta's account that birth arouses the least public interest. The band welcomes each birth gladly but at the same time accepts it as no more than its due. The wives of its menfolk are expected to produce children; it is their primary function in the eyes of both the band and their husbands, and even in their own eyes.

The Pygmies seem to believe that menstrual blood is an important factor in conception (Schebesta, 1948, 399) and are well aware of the connection between coition and conception (1948, 400). Schebesta reports frequently hearing the opinion expressed that repeated coition would hasten the hour of birth.

[P. 177-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 •
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[ARCHERS]

The *toré* society, however, widens the field of Mbuti social contact because it embraces, according to Schebesta (1948, 492 ff.), villagers and Pygmies throughout the Ituri, being basically the same as other societies going under different names, such as *anyoto*, *nebeli*, *molimo*, and *lusomba* (the latter two among the Bira-Sua). The common denominator of all these societies is the common belief in the bush demon, the divinity of the Mbuti hunters. The *toré* society, as seen by Schebesta, is thus the origin of similar villager societies in the district. It has a particular significance for the Mbuti who claim it as their own.

Although women are normally excluded, the Mbuti, says Schebesta, admit aged women. The villagers admit only one old woman who is charged with the duty of cooking for the men. Further, he says, the society terrifies the villager women (cf. Anne Putnam) which is not the case with the Mbuti. The society always meets outside the village, in the bush or in a remote, dark area of the forest. Schebesta (1948, 498) witnessed no exclusively Mbuti meeting of the *toré* society, only mixed Mbuti and villager, and exclusively villager, meetings.

The meeting place contains the hut of *toré*, in which are kept the musical instruments used during the ceremonies and on the march. The number and type of these instruments vary, says Schebesta, the commonest being a long trumpet made of wood, slightly curved, some-

[P 183-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[ARCHERS]

P Z 575 562 The society plays a part in social life by chastizing rebels, particularly women (Schebesta, 1948). All whom Schebesta (1937) questioned assured him that the primary object of the society was to keep the women in their place, mainly by stealing food from them for the society to feast upon. It is perhaps also worth mentioning that Schebesta (1937, 101) writes: "Nowadays in the main a *toré* meeting place is just a home for hen-pecked husbands. . . . It has no connection in any way with the ceremonial of tribal initiation."

P Z 575 881 177 114 He modified these views in his later work (Schebesta, 1948, 492 ff.) but used the same evidence. He finds a definite connection between the *toré* society and the *nkumbi* "circumcision initiation." The latter, he says, is founded on the same belief in *toré* but has taken a villager form. Circumcision above all is a villager custom and has nothing to do with Mbuti initiation. Originally, the Mbuti knew only the association of *toré*, which integrated the young men into the adult group of *toré* hunters.

P Z 575 182 [562] As far as can be seen from this material, the *toré* society has both social and magico-religious functions. Its primary social function is the control of the womenfolk of any one Mbuti band (who, it will be remembered, come from varied bands and do not have the same communal feeling as the menfolk). Schebesta mentions the fact that, when a meeting of the Mbuti *toré*

P 575

[P. 184-B]

[ARCHERS]

[P.184-C]

society is to take place, any raiding of the plantations of village women that is proposed is made known to the villagers in advance, and meat is offered in exchange.

Schebesta (1948, 501 ff.) gives a detailed description of a joint village-Mbuti *toré* ceremony. At about 10 o'clock at night, announced by blasts on the trumpet, a procession of some 20 men, villagers, and Mbuti, entered the village, dancing wildly. The Pygmies (as always) were the musicians and blew into three sonorous clay pots of different sizes, the largest being called "mother" and the others "children." The largest pot contained just enough water to cover the bottom, into which a pipe was thrust. Some sang; others made weird noises by holding their noses.[1] In the morning the procession left for the Pygmy camp, two hours away. Before they passed through small village hamlets, someone was sent ahead to warn the inhabitants who had not heard the approaching blasts of the long wooden horn; women and children fled to the shelter of their huts as the procession went by. In one village a woman who remained in sight was threatened and made to give a chicken in payment for her release. On nearing the Pygmy camp, the trumpet was hidden in the brush, and the musicians took another path. The main procession entered the camp, where there were only a few old men and their wives.

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

of his own creation. But among the Epulu net hunters, and other central and western groups, in which village tribal structure has not been so greatly affected, the relationship is still, in Putnam's opinion, intensely personal between individual and individual, or family and family. The superficial dissatisfaction manifest between Pygmy and villager over their trade relationship is a result of and symbolizes the present stratification with the villager at the upper end of the scale and hides the inner feelings of loyalty and affection that Putnam says exists between the two groups.

SOCIAL LIFE

Family Organization

For the most part the family organization among the net hunters is the same as that described by Schebesta for the archers, and, as with them, some of the women come from different bands and are strangers to one another. The net hunting camps are larger, however, than those of the archers, and it is seldom that a bride finds herself a total stranger in her new home. Further, because of the differences in hunting technique, cooperative feeling among the women of a net-hunting band is much stronger than that

[P. 211 - D]

[NET HUNTERS]

184 [P.212-A]
621 in a band of archers. Women are vital to the
476 hunt and have their own part to play in it. In
562 addition, they must undertake all the duties
[462] and responsibilities described by Schebesta: the building and care of the home, gathering vegetable food, and, above all, the raising of a family. Putnam's notes do not give much information on the status of women, but it would seem to be fully as high as that of women among the archers, according to Schebesta, and also proportional, to a certain extent, to their fertility. The net-hunter band has the same responsibilities to its men's womenfolk as does the archer band.

621
562
184

593 The man, however, spends relatively more
[184] time with his wife and family than can an archer. When the band is large enough, several families may stay behind while the others go
[512] hunting. On such occasions the womenfolk may go gathering, at which time the men attend to their various chores such as the manufacture of barkcloth, repair of hunting nets, and other specifically male duties, or else the women may find work to do in the camp, in which they are aided by their husbands. The men are good fathers and, contrary to Schebesta's assertion for the archers, take pleasure in looking after their children, playing with them, and amusing them with stories and mime.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

ter. During this time the food was being cooked, and the women were still chattering, though shut up in their huts. After eating, and when all the women were silent, the serious singing began.

Final mention should be made of the coincidence of an *elima* initiation and a *molimo* meeting, described by Anne Putnam. It is the custom of the *elima* to sing through the night, as do the boys of the initiation during the *nkumbi*. When the women once found themselves rivaled by some men singing the "hunting" *molimo*, they competed but were sung down and finally gave up. As soon as the sounds of the *molimo* trumpet died into the distance, however, the women started up again. When it was a case of death, and serious *molimo* singing, the women offered no competition.

It is told by these Mbuti that in the old days the *molimo* was an animal that belonged to the women, and all the men had to run away every time they saw it. But then the men caught the

[1] Subsequently I saw many more meetings of the *molimo* association (1960b, 1961) and its two different aspects were clarified and reconciled.

[P 227-D]

(NET HUNTERS)

173 (p.228-A)
534 animal and since then no woman has been al-
825 lowed to see it.
562 Local villagers, who claim also to have the
171 *molimo*, are critical of the occasional joking at-
177 titude of the Mbuti and say that they, the vil-
534 lagers, call it out only when someone important has died.

POLITICAL LIFE

Authority

622 Putnam goes further than Schebesta with re-
888 gard to the existence or non-existence of chief-
tainship among the Mbuti. Primarily of the net
(623) hunters he writes, "... there are no chiefs, councils, or any other formal governing bodies in a pygmy camp" (Putnam, 1948, 334). There is respect, he says, for age and experience (*not* for "elders"); the opinions of the old and the wise are generally heeded. Any individual who shows disrespect for an old man, or who refuses to comply with any reasonable request, is abused by the others. Old men who are eccentrics are ignored.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

621 Younger men, regardless of family or lineage
627 ties, brought food to the transgressor, who
684 stayed outside the camp for two days. His reappearance on the third day caused no excitement on either side. This must not be taken as a full account of the incident. Undoubtedly a great deal is not known about how the settlement was effected, but it is useful to show with what informality a serious transgression can be dealt with.

571 The intimate nature of a Pygmy camp is stressed by Putnam. Even in the middle of the night, when people are inside their huts, a conversation at one end of the camp can be clearly heard at the opposite end. Thus, even a matri-
578 monial squabble may well become enlarged
627 until it involves the entire band. Matrimonial
[593] disagreements and allegations of flirtation and of selfishness or dishonesty in the division of the meat are frequent causes for dispute. Dis-
[626] putes may be resolved entirely by self help, which may involve a fight or a beating, by public abuse or ridicule during the group dis-
578 cussion, by ostracism, or exile. The group dis-
626 cussion, mainly among men but with comments
• 562 hurled at them by their wives, is the main regulatory mechanism. Both Schebesta and Putnam agreed that the part played by the women, who do not participate directly in these

[P 231-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[p. 231-C]

gatherings of the men but sit outside their huts, listening and making loud comments, is not insignificant. In the early stages of a dispute among the net hunters, a woman may take a leading part on behalf of whichever member of her family is involved, but not when the dispute becomes the topic of these evening discussions.

Apart from the driving of the incestuous youth from the camp, there is no record of even temporary forcible exile from an Mbuti band. Individuals who offend the group are, however, ostracized and induced to go elsewhere.

Whatever the dispute, and at whatever level it takes place, the entire band is concerned in its settlement. If it is settled in its early stages, it may be assumed that it is with the approval of all. As long as a single voice is raised in disagreement, the dispute continues. Even over a question of hunting, or of moving camp, it may take several days, says Putnam, to reach a decision.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

614 Rules concerning the clan totem vary, in theory and practice. Its flesh may never be eaten by members of the clan and, as far as possible, the animal is avoided—alive or dead. If the clan is dispersed, its seceding factions tend to forget their own totem and adopt the totems of the dominant clans in whose areas they settle, evidently, in fact, effectively changing clan affiliation.

784 562 [262] The second kind of taboo mentioned by Putnam is the sex taboo symbolizing the differences in male and female activities. Women and children eat frogs and toads; men refuse to touch them. As mentioned above (p. 211), this [825] difference is probably connected with the as- [823] sociation between these amphibians and both water (portending disaster) and land (the hunt).

784 The third type of taboo is the taboo applicable to times of crisis in the life cycle—puberty, pregnancy, and mourning. At such times certain taboos are observed, but they vary from band to band, and there is no detailed information.

262 Lastly, Putnam mentions the existence of

[1] By "clan" Putnam means a patriclan or gens.

[P. 239-B]

182 With regard to material culture and tech-
184 nology, there is far more uniformity than divergence. The technology of the net hunters demonstrates a greater adaptation to the forest environment, and their material culture is consistent with the fact that they are more truly
[482] nomadic than the archers. Heavy objects such as the mortars and drums mentioned by Schebesta could not be maintained by a nomadic band unless it was always within easy reach of the village.

ECONOMIC LIFE

224 In a comparison of the two major types of
184 hunt, according to which we classify the Mbuti into archers and net hunters, three factors in particular are worth noting:

1. The net hunt, of all the hunting methods described (including the *begbe* beat of the archers), produces both the surest and the largest supply of meat. The inadequacy of archery
[411] among the Mbuti, owing partly to inaccuracy
[177] with their small bows and partly to the gen-
[439] erally poor visibility, may account in part for the greater economic dependence of the archer bands on their villager neighbors.

2. The net hunt is essentially a cooperative
224 activity, requiring the participation of the band
484 as a whole, including women and children. It
62 reinforces the strength of the band as such; it
562 does not differentiate between the relationships
184 of the men and the women toward the forest; and it establishes for each sex a basic and

[P 244-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[p. 244-C]

mutually dependent and equally important role in this, the major activity of the Mbuti. Archery, on the other hand, may be conducted on a familial basis or, as is described by Schebesta, with the cooperation of two or three men. It is not essentially cooperative, and it does not include women and children, so placing the sexes in different relationships with the forest. In so far as hunting is the "superior" economic activity (though economically perhaps less important than gathering), it emphasizes the disparity of status between the sexes.

3. The net hunt, demanding close cooperation and lack of specialization, is associated with a more egalitarian political system than that of the archers. While Schebesta described an embryonic chieftainship, with powerful lineage heads, Putnam vigorously denies the existence of even a council of elders. Further, according to Putnam, whereas an old man is treated with respect, he is so only if age is accompanied by wisdom. A great hunter is respected regardless of his age. An unmarried boy of 16 who kills a buffalo with a spear is entitled to have a net of his own and to take full part in the meetings of the men's religious association. Such leadership as exists among the net hunters is charismatic, with little emphasis on lineage—a position quite the reverse of that described by Schebesta for the archers.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[p.245-c]
mere outward expression of an inevitable relationship brought about by territorial propinquity. It would certainly seem, from both accounts, that there is no question of necessity on either side. The Mbuti *can* gather all they need, and the villagers *can* hunt, without having to go far into the forest, by using traps, pits, spear falls, and other means.

SOCIAL LIFE

We indicate above some of the differences in social life that may be attributed to differences in hunting technique, notably because of the cooperative nature of the net hunt. In the material considered in the section on Social Life (pp. 211–223), these differences may be observed more directly. There is not only greater parity between the sexes among the net hunters, but also the father enters more fully into family life than among the archers. We would connect this difference with the lesser importance of the lineage among the net hunters. Schebesta (1948, 306–307) describes a "local group" (i.e., an economic hunting unit) as being primarily a lineage, under the authority of the

lineage elder. Owing to the prevailing rules of exogamy, this means that the "local group" is in fact the adult male community, to which are attached the wives and unmarried sisters or daughters. The "family" is primarily a separate, if not opposed, unit consisting of mothers and their children (including boys up to their *nkumbi* initiation). Schebesta (1948, 320 ff.) does not deny the authority of the father in the family. Indeed, he gives it as a frequent source of conflict between husband and wife, but it is authority as a member of the lineage to which his wife is a stranger rather than authority as a father. Further, Schebesta (1948, 313 ff.) makes no mention of women's associations other than individual friendship of neighbors who may work and gather together.

The picture we get from Putnam's account is quite different. Among net hunters the band is primarily an economic unit. There is no such highly developed lineage feeling. Authority is vested not in any representative of the lineage but rather in the economically important and valuable members of the group. He stresses the part that women play in group discussions. Although their position may appear to be peripheral, neither he nor Anne Putnam underestimates the weight they carry in any discussion,

[P. 245-D]

[p. 246-A]

ostensibly between the group of males sitting together around a campfire. The net-hunting band, then, consists of men and women. There is no hint of any opposition between the individual family and the band.

That there is virtually a total absence of any data on kinship terminology is in itself significant. Apparently a classificatory system, if one exists, is in extremely simple form, reduced to generational levels (grandchildren and grandparents, children and parents, and siblings) for each sex. There is no evidence that special terms are used to distinguish between, say, a patrilineal and a matrilineal grandparent. Also, when referring to his wife's brother's child in KiNgwana, an Mbuti calls him, if he uses a term at all, *mutoto*, whereas an Ngwana uses the reciprocal term *muyomba*. But, more frequently, the Mbuti use personal names, distinguished when there is possibility of confusion either by the addition of the name of the patrilineal grandfather (not the ancestor) or by the substitution of a name in another language.

551 Thus in the Epulu region most Mbuti have both Ngwana and Bira names, not necessarily with
[613] the same meaning. The occasional use of a
[602] grandfather's name is another indication of the lack of importance attached to lineal ties in this group, and an indication of the size of the largest group to which they conceive of themselves as belonging. Clan names (ancestor names) exist, but these seem to have little social significance. Place names are used frequently to differentiate one hunting band from another.

621 563 It is virtually impossible to distinguish any of the alien families that have attached themselves to a net-hunting band, so completely are they assimilated. Perhaps the easiest indication would be open flirtation between members of the opposite sex within a hunting band. And finally (see below, p. 257, for a fuller treatment), there is the *elima*, the women's religious association which unites the women of the band in opposition to the men (regardless of lineage), and at the same time acknowledges the common values of both, so unites them as a single group in relation to the forest. It also unifies the total band in relationship to the worlds of spirits, animals, villagers, and presumably of other semi-human beings such as Europeans. It never unifies the band in opposition to other hunting bands or lineages.

[832] [186]

621 575 562 182

[P 246- B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

POLITICAL LIFE

The fact that authority is vested in the lineage for the archers, and in the great hunters among the net hunters, is mentioned above as one of the major differences corresponding to the difference in hunting technique. Also relative to this difference is the greater emphasis laid by Putnam on the participation of women in public discussion among the net hunters. We cannot go beyond this bare observation of fact, however, as there is no recorded description of authority in action beyond one or two isolated records of conjugal disputes. From these it is evident how even a private dispute enlarges its bounds by being taken up by all within earshot (which means in effect all in the camp), until everyone is involved. If the dispute is settled before it reaches these proportions, it can be assumed that it is with the approval of the entire group, as they are all aware of it whether they

184 554 [562] • 508 621 627

[P. 246-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[p. 247-A]

have taken part or not. With Schebesta's archers it seems that the lineage elder is the final authority, below which rank the family heads.

Whereas the status of men is related to hunting ability and to proficiency in the arts of mime, dance, and song, the factors involved in determining the status of women are not clear. Fertility is probably one factor, and, almost certainly, ability as a singer another, for a good singer takes a leading part in the *elima* celebrations. The *elima* itself may be connected with adult male status, since one of its main features is the battle between the young men seeking to gain admission to the *elima* hut and the women guarding it. Married men may and do take part in this battle, but there comes a point when a man has neither the incentive nor, possibly, the necessary stamina. Anne Putnam writes of one elderly Mbuti, still active as a hunter, who was seen to cry during an *elima* festival. In response to a question he answered: "I fought my way into many an Alima hut when I was younger. Now I have no desires. It saddens me" (Putnam, 1954, 218). A young man who does not take part in the *elima* is a subject for ridicule.

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

The primary purpose of the *molimo* for the Pygmies is to maintain and to restore normality in the forest. (We must ignore its possible social function at the moment because of insufficient information.) It fulfills its purpose through song and by the use of the *molimo* horn. The association may meet informally any evening as the men sit around the main campfire. They may sing *molimo* songs as well as hunting songs, but the horn will not be heard. Women and children are not excluded from the group, though, as is their normal habit, they usually keep to their own individual firesides. The association meets formally following any crisis such as death, serious illness, or exceptionally poor hunting. Women and children are then rigidly excluded, and the *molimo* horn is used. These formal occasions compel the attendance of all members. Adult members of the hunting band who are away come back; adult male visitors to the camp take part.

There is no formal body of magical belief and practice among the net hunters, nor, according to Schebesta (1952, 337), among the archers.

[P. 256 - D]

[P. 257-A]

For the net hunters, the *molimo* is their only means of dealing with the unknown, with situations for which they have no practical, immediately effective remedy. Individuals may and do indulge in the spontaneous practice of sympathetic magic, but this is informal and unsystematized. The *molimo* (and the *elima* to a lesser extent) may be considered "magical" in that the meeting of the association in proper circumstances is believed to restore normality to a situation that has in some way deviated. The "proper circumstances" to which I refer seem to be the non-participation of women and children, the attendance of all adult male members of the band, the use of special songs and the *molimo* horn, persistence in nocturnal meetings of the association, and constant reiteration of the songs until normality is restored. As far as is known, although certainty is lacking, the meeting of the association, which may last for a month, is not accompanied by any taboos on hunting or gathering, eating, or sexual activity. Some doubt exists also as to the position of women with regard to the *molimo*.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

796 If this is magic, it is totally different from the
776 kind of magic practiced by the villagers, for
778 which the Mbuti reserve an attitude of skepti-
782 cal amusement. Whatever it is, it shows a very
575 different attitude to the forest from that of the
[829] villagers. My interpretation of the *molimo*, from the meetings I have attended and the conversations I have overheard, is that it is an association of hunters that has the power of making itself heard by the God of the Forest. This God is referred to by many different names, even within the same band, and, as frequently as not, is simply referred to as "The Forest," also, though less often, as "Father" and "Grandfather." The association must ful-
[533] fill the conditions listed above in order to make
[534] itself heard; the *molimo* horn used in conjunction with song is the focal point of the meetings.
[562] Women and children are presumably excluded,
[858] because hunting, the most important of all activities to the Mbuti and regarded by him as such, is primarily the province of men, and the God of the Forest is also God of the Hunt.[1] The dominant note of the meetings is unanimity and insistence. All hunters must attend. They sit in a tight group around the fire as if by this

[1] It might be expected that, as the net hunt involves cooperation between both sexes, the women would have some part to play in the *molimo* among net hunters, at least.

[D 257-B]

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

nuclear family often before the band—these are more the concern of the elders. As we are here considering the normal run of daily life we are leaving aside special occasions such as the *elima* and *molimo* festivals, which are primarily religious in nature, but in which the hunters and youths play their own distinct parts together with the elders.

The hunters are generally in the middle of any dispute that occurs, but in a serious dispute it is more likely to be an elder that will be able to effect a settlement. It is, however, the disputes of the hunters that establish the lines along which fission and fusion will take place, and the elders have little influence over this process, nor do they even seem to wish to influence it. They content themselves by using the respect that is accorded them to maintain some kind of balance between the band factions. It is the hunters who initiate both fission and fusion, and who are thus responsible for the composition of the band. Relationships with neighboring bands and with the villagers, insofar as they are determined by band movement, are also largely in their hands, and in this sense the hunters may be considered the political leaders of the band. In this the women are almost, if not fully, the equals of the men.

The hunter's life is the most active and arduous, and this may in part be responsible for his somewhat disputatious nature. In elderhood there is a chance to relax. There is no shame in an elder having his children bring him back food, and in any case he may be needed to keep an eye on the camp while the hunt is away. It is an age group to which a man or a woman resigns himself with some reluctance, but in which he soon finds considerable satisfaction. He is able to intervene in disputes without fear of physical violence, for one thing, and often does so with enjoyment. The elder is undoubtedly the arbiter, though by no means the only source of solution. From his position of immunity he is able to interfere in the most private and domestic affairs of anyone. Whereas a hunter solves his problems empirically, answering facts with facts, the elder solves those that face him with considered opinion, drawing from a lifetime of experience. A hunter would be laughed at if he could not support an opinion with fact. An elder is never expected to do so, and is consequently admirably fitted to deal with moral and spiritual matters. It is, however, opinion that he offers, not judgment. He will concern himself in questions of the upbringing of children, of their puberty and of their marriage. At any time of major crisis the elder will play the resolving part, though the

2: Tumbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

no further, except to point again to the obvious potential relationship between hunting technology and village exchange, the net-hunters being more easily able to acquire an excess of meat than the archers. However, it is difficult to ascertain just how far this relationship is effectual, for even the net-hunters maintain minimal exchange with the villagers, and only on the same nonformalized individual basis. There is rather more likelihood among the archers for there to exist a *capita* or *sultani* who will convey to his fellow-Mbuti the wishes of the villagers although he has no authority to take any other action, and this may be seen as being due, in part at least, to the less productive technology of the archers, and in part to the greater prevalence of fragmentation into small sub-bands.

DIVISION OF LABOR

There is little to say about the division of labor in Mbuti society, but most important is the fact that there is no religious belief or ritual practice that relates any activity to any one sex, nor is there any consecration of those everyday tasks that normally fall into the jurisdiction of one sex or the other. This, of course, is what might be expected from the personal terminology, which differentiates the sexes clearly only at the parental level. Basically men hunt and make hunting equipment, and organize the *molimo* festivals. The women gather vegetable foods and other forest produce, build the huts, prepare and cook the food; they organize the *elima* festival. Men make bark cloth, women make baskets. Children take part in all the economic activities. But women help make the nets, and they invariably make the twine from which the nets are made. Among the net-hunters the women, girls and young children act as beaters and are thus an integral part of the hunt, as they are among the archers in the archer *begbe* hunt. Men of both archer and net-hunter bands have no hesitation in gathering mushrooms and other vegetable foods when they have the opportunity. In both groups it is primarily and almost exclusively the men who gather the honey, for women seldom climb trees.

Women take part in the *molimo* and, although it is a small part, it is a highly significant one. The *elima*, though organized by the women and stemming from the maturation of a girl, is of equal importance to the male youths who play a vital role in the festival. All in all, sex does not seem to be of any particular significance in determining the structure of Mbuti economic activity. Of far greater significance is age,

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Following is an example of different rules for the distribution of game:

NET-HUNTERS

Area	*Portion of body*	*Given to*
Epulu	Head	Elders, for wisdom
	Back	Male hunters, for strength
	Private parts	Children, to help them grow
	Shoulder, liver, heart	Owners of net, spear, and others who helped in kill
Wamba	Head	Sister or sister-in-law, or to dog if it helped in kill
	Back and forelegs	Shared all around
	Private parts	Owner of net
	Rear legs, liver, chest	Owner of net and those who helped in kill
	Stomach	Elders
Biasiku	Head	Women, or to owner of dog if it helped in kill
	Back	The woman who carried the animal back to camp
	Private parts	Children (who also get other intestines)
	Forelegs and liver	Net-owner and helpers
	Rear legs	Net-owner and helpers
	Stomach	Women
	Chest	Net-owner

ARCHERS

Area	*Portion of body*	*Given to*
Kilo	Head	Owner of dog
	Chest, legs, liver, heart	Owner of dog
	Back	Divided among all
	Rump	Elders, particularly to dog-owner's father, who will then further share it
	Stomach	Anyone who might have gone ahead and first put up the game

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Area	*Portion of body*	*Given to*
Nduye	Head	Women
	Back and legs	Shared all around
	Private parts	Dog-owner (who will give them to the dog)
	Intestines	Shared all around
	Stomach	Elders
Biasa	Head	Owner of dog
	Chest and legs	Shared all around
	Back	Dog-owner
	Private parts	Children and elders
	Stomach	Elders

It will be seen that the only element the various systems have in common is in the selection of certain categories of people. Women are separated from the men among all three net-hunting bands and one archer band. The net-owner corresponds to the archer dog-owner. Elders are singled out everywhere except at Biasiku, where the hunters said they would be obliged to give the elders whatever they wanted. Children figure in two net-hunting bands, and only in one archer band, where they are coupled with elders.

The only kinship relations specified are "sister and sister-in-law," which can perhaps be better interpreted simply as "women," among the Wamba net-hunters, and "dog-owner's father" at the Kilo archer camp, where the hunters were insistent that the rump would be given to the father, if alive, for him to divide among the other elders as he thought fit. In practice, however, sometimes using a village system of kinship obligations, the Mbuti men and women will make claims on grounds of kinship. In any case, as stated, the actual sharing generally is accomplished to suit the needs of the moment rather than to satisfy any system, stated or otherwise.

The net-hunt can then be seen not only as a determining factor on the size of the band but also as a major mechanism for insuring cooperation of band members, and for allowing daily expression of internal hostilities and providing for their resolution through the highly fluid "system" of sharing. While the net-hunt expresses the importance of the nuclear family in that the nuclear family is the basic hunting unit (the father owning the net, the mother beating toward

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the ground, and any who are timid or slow get whisked back into the air again as the sapling rebounds, and are much laughed at for their failure. 221 222 524

The tug-of-war separates the sexes, and although it is primarily an adult game, youths and children sometimes join in. However, it is likely to become rough, and youngsters are not encouraged. A man may, and sometimes does, pull on the side of the women, to make a better match, but he may also go to their side as if to help and then start pulling in the opposite direction. It is then up to the women to decide whether they are better off continuing to pull, or whether it is worth their while for two or three of them to attack the man. They themselves will sometimes leave their side and go to the men's side and simply try and pull them away from the vine rope. No restrictions were evident, and each contest continued until the complete collapse of one side or the other. If anything, among the Epulu net-hunters the women seemed to win more frequently. An immense amount of energy was dissipated in this way, yet one tug-of-war would follow another for sometimes as long as an hour. 221 222 524 562

The division of sexes visible in this contest, and the same implied symbolic conflict, was also visible in the *ekokomea* dance which I saw among the Epulu net-hunters during two honey seasons; but I have also seen the dance in the same band during the course of a *molimo* festival. I found it to be known among all other bands I visited, though I never actually saw it practiced among the archers. With these other bands it is said to be danced on occasions of great importance to the band, such occasions not being specified. 221 222 562 535 831

Ekokomea involves a reversal of the sexes, and everyone from the oldest to the youngest may take part. Usually the children follow the youths and adults and imitate the dance on their own. Women put heavy objects in the bark cloth between their legs and stride along in a way that emphasizes the swinging motion of their "genitalia." The men indicate their assumed female sex by performing divers actions typical only of women, often pretending to clean their private parts as women do. Both men and women, but mainly men, may take a leaf or a small strip of bark cloth or skin, make a slit in it, and proudly display it, occasionally putting a finger through the slit so as to leave the symbolism in no doubt.

The dance begins spontaneously, without preparation, with two or three individuals assuming the reversed roles and marching in line from hut to hut, singing, "*Ekokomes.*" No satisfactory translation

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of the word was ever given to me; it simply refers to an elbow, a chicken or a fallen tree, according to pronunciation. It is pronounced all ways, and all forms of translation are given, stories being invented ad lib to explain the dance.

As people come out of their huts or leave their hearths to join in the line, the movements get more and more suggestive and rhythmic, and when the line is complete couples will break away and dance into the center and there imitate the act of copulation according to their reversed roles, while the others dance around, singing and laughing loudly. Each couple tries to outdo the others in exaggeration and suggestiveness, and just about every conceivable abnormal situation is imitated, dogs, chickens, children, even infants being dragged into the act if they are within reach.

The end of the dance is the usual near-hysterical laughter that is brought on by any form of exaggerated mime or storytelling, with the dancers rolling on the ground and clapping their hands to show their amusement. As soon as this has subsided the dance is likely to start all over again for a second or even a third time.

Ekokomea, however, is by no means danced every day, even during the honey season; more than once or twice a week would be rather frequent. It is similar during the *molimo*. So throughout the year the dance is not likely to take place in any one band more than a dozen times. This is one dance that I have seen danced both in the forest and in the village. It is never danced by the villagers, who regard it as a sign of Mbuti depravity, but who nonetheless watch it with the greatest pleasure. The older Mbuti say it would not be danced in the village, but even to them either its exact significance is not clear or else it is something they were unwilling to discuss.

Much more directly connected with the honey season is a mimetic dance in which the men enact the honey gatherers, the women the bees. The men form a line and dance around the camp as though going through the forest looking and listening for bees. Parallel to them, and sometimes on the verge of the camp or even in the forest, is a line of women. The men sing a honey song, the women buzz like bees. When the men pretend they find the honey and are about to take it, the women descend on them and beat the burning embers they carry above the men's heads so that the sparks fall on them—stinging them like bees, they say. This is often followed by a good-natured fight which may develop either into the tug-of-war or *ekokomea*.

Because of the rarity of ritual performances there is one which

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554 The various fields in which we can speak of authority fall into three
121 main categories—economic, ritual, and legal. In the first two, by authority is meant prominence of activity and participation in discussion in what is, generally, a normal situation. In the last category, legal, the situation is abnormal, one of dispute, and by authority is meant prominence in the settling of that dispute. Nowhere does it have any validity unless backed by common assent. Yet it is more than mere influence, for in each field certain classes of individuals are recognized as having the right and ability to interpret the pleasure of the forest.

554 Table 8[1] indicates the distribution of this "authority" throughout
561 the band. It will be seen that it is evenly divided between the sexes
[562] and among all adult age levels; only the children are not accorded any authority except among themselves. Further, authority is located at one age level or another or with the nuclear family, with few exceptions. For the life crises (excluding birth), authority is divided between the youths and the elders. Youths and elders also share responsibility for the camp while the hunt is away, even if some of the hunters remain behind.

554 There are many examples of Mbuti who have appeared in the role
[648] of leader vis-à-vis the village, but as their authority was nil in relation to forest life, they need not concern us here. Their only function in the forest, other than their normal role as hunters, was to communicate the wishes of the one group of people to the other.

554 The only individual who might be recognized as occupying a special
156 political position in the life of the hunting band, on any ground other
522 than age, is the camp clown. He is usually a hunter, and his position
626 is unofficial, depending on his abilities as an actor and a clown. He
627 is not appointed, and there is no special name for him or his position. However, every band seems to have its clown. His function is to act as a buff between disputants, deflecting the more serious disputes away from their original sources, absolving other individuals of blame by accepting it himself. Frequently he will end a dispute simply through the use of ridicule, and although such ridicule may be taken as a form of judgment, the essential point is that once again its objective is to divert attention from the source of the dispute and also to divert blame from anyone who is clearly in the wrong. The major concern of all, except possibly the prime disputants, is that the dispute shall be ended, and frequently by creating or reviving another, lesser dispute the clown brings the disputants into the same frame of mind.

[1] [see page 330 -- Analyst]

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593 578 Everyone was tired of disputes in the camp, and they turned on Kengé and told him it was he who was a bad husband. He promptly said, "I shall tell my mother; I shall tell her everything, and she will come here." His mother was notoriously argumentative, and the thought of having another disputant on their hands was too much. There were unanimous shouts of disapproval, whereupon Kengé said, "So you let the Lesé Mbuti join empty Cephu in our territory, Cephu who always hunts against us and should be turned out completely and forever, yet you do not want your own mother-in-law to come and live with you. What kind of Mbuti are you?" He went inside his hut and after a few muffled cries and sounds of blows, there were other sounds, less offensive, and in a half hour or so Kengé and his wife came out together, making a great show of friendliness, peering into Mbaaka's hut and laughing loudly at them for fighting so much.

DISPUTES CONCERNING TRIVIA

578 152 A headache, a hungry stomach, a painful leg, a leaking hut or a damp forest—almost any kind of discomfort is likely to make an Mbuti irritable, and he will pick a quarrel with ease and readiness so that he can make his heart feel better, as they say. It is known to be bad to keep things concealed, so there is no particular disgrace in voicing suspicions and revealing antagonisms, particularly if it is done quietly. Few, however, managed to make their heart feel better without creating a great deal of noise and making everyone else feel considerably worse.

578 Most such disputes, and there were likely to be several every day, died as they began, in complete indecision. The following are typical instances:

524 881 26. A small girl, playing in imitation of the boy's *nkumbi*, playfully whipped some of the men, including her uncle, Masalito. Masalito was enraged and hit her, which started a fight between his age mates—that is, the young hunters.

534 542 27. Pepei fought another youth with sticks because the other told him to beat the *banja* sticks, and Pepei said he was not a woman to be ordered around. Tungana's wife then beat Pepei, saying that women do not get ordered around, only children, and that is why nobody will marry him.

593 28. Kengé beat his sister because she caught cold.

29. A girl returning from the village related how there was an

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602 561 121 If we forget the usual genealogical associations of kinship and think in a strictly classificatory manner, we do have here an institutionalization of a kinship relationship and the beginnings of a kinship system, for we have already seen the vital importance of age in determining one's realm of activity and responsibility among the Mbuti, and how each of the four levels of *apua'i* act together in distinction from the other levels. But there seems little point in persisting any further with the term "kinship system" in this instance unless we define kinship so as to contradict its very fundamental significance in the more highly structured societies. With the Mbuti we are dealing with kith rather than kin, and the terminological division of the society into four age levels is best thought of as completely divorced from kinship except, and it is a vital exception, insofar as the nuclear family, and the ideal relations that should pertain among its members, are taken as the model relationships for the band. With this in mind, let us examine other relationships implicit in the terminology.

601 561 562 It is noticeable that the terminology distinguishes age levels, and only distinguishes between the sexes at the parental level (*ema* and *eba*). Children, siblings and grandparents (in their widest classificatory sense) are considered without emphasizing any male/female polarity. Sex differentiation can be made, and where necessary this is done, but only in the same rather roundabout way in which any genealogical connection can be traced. In order to differentiate an *apua'i* who is merely a friend from one who is a uterine brother, one has to add the expression "from one stomach" to designate the latter. Similarly, one can add the terms designating male or female to any term of address or reference except that of mother or father, where it is not needed.[2]

562 462 This avoidance of sex differentiation is consistent with the interdependence between the sexes that is so characteristic of Mbuti economic life, and with the egalitarianism that exists between them in the realm of government. A woman is in no way the social inferior of a man, and there is little absolute division of labor along sex lines. [224] Among the net-hunters in particular, and among the archers during [222] the *begbe* beat-hunt, cooperation between the sexes during the hunt

[193] [2] I have come across instances where a vowel or consonant change has been said to indicate the sex differential (as happens in some Sudanic Languages), such as *tata* and *taté* for male and female grandparent, *apua'i* and *amua'i* for male and female sibling, but there was no consistency in the practice. Wherever it was necessary to make the difference, there was need for stress, and this was in any case better achieved by the more dramatic addition of *moko* or *kali*. At the level where this most frequently is done, a male child would thus be distinguished from a female child: *miki a moko, miki a kali*.

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is essential, and gathering, though done mostly by women, may also be done by men when opportunity affords. Perhaps the most significant activity that is generally performed by women is that of house-building. The only men I have seen build their own houses have been bachelors or widowers, and even then they will frequently get women to do this for them. The woman builds the house; she has the final say in selecting the site. She is in charge of the family hearth, where the cooking is done and around which the family eats and sleeps. Her husband may eat with other men at the central hearth, so the family fire may be said to be of major importance to her and her children. And it is precisely at the parental level that the personal terminology differentiates the sexes.

Looking for significant differences in attitudes and relationships between a child and its mother and father, it is plain that the mother is regarded as the source of food, despite the fact that the father is the prime force in the hunt. It might be worth mentioning again here that vegetable foods (entirely discounting village influence) form the bulk of any forest diet, and their nutritive value is probably equal at least to that of the game consumed. In any case, the father gives the game and any vegetables he may have gathered to his wife, who cooks the food and distributes it. A hungry child looks to any one of his classificatory mothers for food, not to his fathers. His most likely chance of finding it will be at the hearth of his nuclear family, but any mother is under as strong an obligation to feed him as the mother from whose stomach he came.

There is no doubting the difference in the emotional connotations of *ema* and *eba*, differences that are not found to exist in attitudes to the sexes at other age levels. *Ema* (mother) is associated with love (*ekondi*); *eba* (father) is associated with authority (*mota*). We have referred a number of times to the habit of the Mbuti addressing the forest as *ema* and *eba*, and although I can adduce no body of evidence to indicate on what occasions it is addressed by which term, it would seem to reflect the attitude of the individual at the moment of address, and the frequency with which the forest is addressed, as both indicate something of great importance in understanding the Mbuti value system, upon which social order so largely depends. The forest is not only the provider, it is also the ruler; it is to be regarded with affection and respect, and under all circumstances to be trusted.[8]

[8] Schebesta (1952, 340) asserts: *"Les noms attribués à Dieu relèvent de deux catégories. Ou bien on l'invoque simplement sous ceux d'afa, bapapa, odu . . . père, grand-*

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TABLE 8

621 561 554 562

FIELDS OF AUTHORITY	Nuclear Family	Youths	Hunters	Elders
1. *Economic*				
Hunting			△	
Gathering (Joint male/female authority among the net-hunters)			○	
Honey collecting			△	
Exchange with village	△○			
Industry (manufacture of material possessions)	△○			
Camp supervision (in absence of the hunt)		△○		△○
2. *Ritual*				
Birth	△○			
Puberty, betrothal and marriage: the *elima*		○		○
Death: the *molimo*		△		△
3. *Legal*				
Conjugal harmony	△○			
Individual disputes (personal insults, abuse, failure to share food or property, etc.)			△○	
Group disputes (any of the former that become enlarged beyond the realm of those directly concerned)				△○

Thus distribution of authority according to age and sex is almost equal as follows:

Family:	4	Male:	12
Youths:	3	Female:	11
Hunters:	4		
Elders:	4		

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singing snatches of songs and shouting back and forth to one another about all the animals they were going to kill and eat.

Occasionally we heard an echo of our own voices coming back from the depths of the forest. Then we stopped, and one by one the young men shouted bold phrases to imaginary maidens, holding their noses and mouths, ready to stifle the shriek of laughter that would come when the same rude challenge was shouted back at them. They clapped one another on the back and held onto one another for support as they laughed, inventing all sorts of things they would do and say to any girl who answered them in such a way. The Pygmy is not in the least self-conscious about showing his emotions; he likes to laugh until tears come to his eyes and he is too weak to stand. He then sits down or lies on the ground and laughs still louder.

As we went on the forest became more spacious, and it seemed lighter, although the trees still met high overhead and shut out all direct sunlight. There was no need to worry about overhanging branches now, for here the forest was virgin, untouched by the sacrilegious hand of the village cultivator, and clear of heavy undergrowth. The ground was soft underfoot, carpeted with leaves that sometimes concealed a projecting root. But the pygmies knew where every obstacle was, even though they could not see it, and they picked up their feet to avoid tripping.

On all sides we could see for twenty or thirty yards. The giant trunks of the old trees were surrounded by slender, branchless saplings, all so far apart that we could wander off the path freely at almost any point. Here and there the main path was crossed by a smaller path made by some animal, and Kenge frequently turned off and followed the animal trail, beckoning me to follow. A few minutes later he would stop and sit down on his bundle, and then when the rest appeared along the main path he would jump to his feet and make fun of them for "walking like the BaNgwana." The

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dabate still had her fine maiden's figure, with firm upstanding breasts. Nobody ever mentioned the fact that they were childless. Kondabate decorated herself more than any other Pygmy girl I have known, and by every possible means, Negro and Pygmy. She not only dyed her body with designs of vines and fruits, painted on with the black juice of the gardenia fruit, but she also had elaborate patterns cicatrized on her stomach, and her teeth were filed to sharp points so that when she smiled or laughed, as she frequently did, she looked just a little dangerous. Kondabate decided to build her house to the north of the hillock, so that she was next to old Sau, and opposite her father.

During the afternoon Amabosu, Sau's son—the great singer—went around from hut to hut with Manyalibo's adopted son, Madyadya. (Manyalibo had offered his molimo for Balekimito's festival, as Ekianga said he had none.) The two youths stood outside the entrance to each hut with a basket and a length of cord made from *nkusa* vine, the kind of cord used for making hunting nets. Madyadya held one end of the cord while Amabosu tied the other in a noose and laid it in the doorway of the hut. The owner of the hut, or her husband if she was not there, would put a small bunch of bananas in the noose, or a manioc root, or a bundle of mushrooms, or perhaps even a small piece of meat, and Madyadya would jerk the string taut. After a brief mock struggle he would haul in the catch and put it in his basket, then go on to the next hut. From every hut the two collected an offering of food in this way. When their basket was full they hung it up on a tree stump beside the central fire that was now blazing between Manyalibo's hut and the hut his daughter was busily making. This fire had itself been made up from offerings of wood collected from each family hearth. I remembered seeing Manyalibo go around taking an ember or log from every fireplace, whether the owners were there or not.

I noticed that only men sat at this fire and asked Kenge why this

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was. He told me it was the *kumamolimo,* "the place of the molimo," and now that everyone was here we were going to start the festival. The food that had been collected from hut to hut was to feed the molimo, because the molimo was a hungry animal that ate a great deal. He added pointedly that it smoked a great deal too, and when I gave him several packets of cigarettes he solemnly put them with the food in the molimo basket.

About an hour later, when I was in my hut, I noticed that Makubasi and Ausu were standing outside, obviously wanting to say something. Usually they were not backward about interrupting, and I was puzzled when Ausu beckoned with his head that I should come outside. He whispered in my ear that a few of them were going off to get the molimos, as we were to start the festival that night. Masimongo, Kenge's brother-in-law, had said that he, as well as Manyalibo, wanted to bring out his molimo, and make it a doubly great festival. Half a dozen youths were waiting to see if I would go with them, but they told me that the place where the molimo lived was a long way off and we would have to run all the way and return when it was dark.

Of course I said I would go, and we started off immediately. But halfway across the camp Masimongo leaped into my way and shouted that I was not to go. For a moment there was a loud and sharp argument, most of which I could not follow. Finally Njobo, to whom everyone always listened, said that he had seen me in the forest and knew I could travel as well and as fast as the others, so that I would be safe. Masisi then objected with a shrill torrent of words, saying that the molimo was none of my business. For a moment I felt like saying I would not go, as I certainly did not want to cause any bad feeling. The others were already moving off at a run, down the path through the glade, not waiting for me.

Njobo pushed me on the shoulder and said to follow quickly, if I was sure I could keep up and would not be afraid of traveling in the

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765 534 long trumpet, with Madyadya holding the front on his shoulder, pointing it over the river toward the camp. Once again the night 765 534 533 was shattered as though there were a whole herd of elephants trumpeting shrilly all around us. When the echoes died away, the camp 825 across the river had fallen silent. Ausu blew into the trumpet again, and this time it was as if a leopard were growling angrily nearby. [201] One of the youths clapped himself under the armpit, as Pygmies frequently do, and said to himself, "That is its voice, just exactly." He clapped himself again with delight, and gave a little growl of his own.

765 533 156 791 534 Little more than a minute had passed when Amabosu, the great singer, appeared from the shadows below us. He looked at us without saying anything, without smiling or making any greeting. His eyes had the strange look they often took on when he was singing or playing the drums in a dance in the village. They seemed to be seeing something quite different from what was going on in front of them. He went up to Ausu and took the molimo from him and [825] gently filled the forest with strange sounds—the rumblings and growls of buffalos and leopards, the mighty call of the elephant, the plaintive cooing of the dove. Interspersed were snatches of song, transformed by the trumpet into a sound quite unlike the song of men—richer, softer, more distant and unapproachable.

765 534 123 He continued blowing as we moved off, down the slope and to the bank of the river, but when we plunged into the water and waded across, the two trumpets left us and were carried upstream. [533] They growled and bellowed somewhere behind us as we made our 765 562 way along the path to the camp. In the clearing the men were standing up to see us arrive, and the women were hurrying about doing what they had to do before shutting themselves up in their huts. The [858] voice of the molimo had warned them that it was time to retire. The children had all been chased inside. One by one leaf doors were

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pulled across the entrances to the little huts, and only the men were left outside.

Njobo was there to greet us, and the first thing he asked was whether I had been able to keep up with the others, or if I had "walked like the BaNgwana." He then turned to the others with an obvious "I told you so" air and said, "You see, it is all right; he knows how to walk." This apparently slight compliment was in fact a very real one, because to the Pygmy it is one of the most important differences between the people of the forest and the people of the village that the latter do *not* know "how to walk." Walking, to the Pygmy, means being able to run swiftly and silently, without slipping, tripping or falling. Every day he depends for his food on his ability to "walk," and more than once his life will be saved by the same ability, when he has to run from a charging buffalo or creep away unnoticed from a sleeping leopard.

Masisi, unbelieving, asked if I had not fallen at least once, and when he was told I had, he roared with laughter. Masimongo, who had been another to object to my going, pointed to my torn clothes, dripping with water and perspiration, and filthy where I had fallen, and he too laughed. Nobody mentioned the molimo.

Kenge came up and asked disapprovingly why I had gone off so quickly without telling him. He said he had cooked dinner and now it was all cold and I would have to go without. He gave my clothes a withering look and said he would wash them out the next day, and that I had better take them off now and get dry. I went over to my hut and changed, and when I came out he had a piping hot meal waiting by a blazing fire.

What followed that evening was to follow every evening for the next two months. It was the focal point of the molimo festival, and the repetition every night was an essential part of it. The ceremony, if you can call it that, did not center around ritual objects, as do the

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765 was neither. Everyone ate his fill as and when he pleased, a couple of
264 the older men saying they would wait until the youngsters had finished before they ate. But they did not wait for long. I was told, however, that everyone *had* to eat, just as no adult male was allowed to sleep but *had* to sing while molimo singing was in progress. Ap-
765 parently one of the greatest crimes that a Pygmy male can commit,
688 if not the greatest, is to be found asleep when the molimo is singing.
[536] One of the men stood up, and miming as all Pygmies love to do, he showed how they used to search for sleeping men, a spear under each arm, and how if they found one they would spear him in the stomach and kill him completely and for ever. I was told that then his body would be buried under the kumamolimo and nobody would be allowed to mention his death, even to remark on his absence. The
[825] women would be told that the molimo itself, the great animal of the forest, had carried off one of their number, but like the men they would ask no questions and would never again mention the missing man.

765 The molimo was often referred to as "the animal of the forest,"
825 and the women were supposed to believe that it really was an animal,
534 and that to see it would bring death. That of course is why they
562 were all bundled off to bed with the children before the trumpet was ever brought into camp. And even when it *was* brought in it was often shielded by a number of youths so that if any woman should happen to look, she would see nothing. The animal sounds it produced were certainly realistic, but I wondered what the women thought when it sang. What kind of animal was it that one moment could make such threatening sounds, and the next instant sing more beautifully than anything else in the whole forest?

765 I remembered again Ausu's saying that the only important thing
533 about the trumpet was the fact that it had a good voice and could
539 sing well. I was reminded of the Pygmy legend of the Bird with the
825 Most Beautiful Song. This bird was found by a young boy who

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expectancy. Every evening, when the women shut themselves up, pretending that they were afraid to see "the animal of the forest"; every evening, when the men gathered around the fire, pretending they thought that the women thought the drainpipes were animals; every evening, when the trumpet drainpipes imitated leopards and elephants and buffalos—every evening, when all this make-believe was going on, I felt that something very real and very great was going on beneath it, something that everyone else took for granted, and about which only I was ignorant.

It was as though the songs which lured the "animal" to the fireside also invoked some other kind of presence. As the evenings wore on toward morning, the songs got more and more serious, and the atmosphere not exactly tense but charged with an emotion powerful enough to send the dancers swirling through the molimo fire as though its flames and red-hot coals held no heat, as though the glowing embers were cold ashes. Yet there was nothing fanatic or frenzied about their action in dancing through the fire. Then there was always that point when the "animal" left the camp and returned to the forest, taking the presence with it. I could feel it departing as the mellow, wistful voice of the molimo got farther and farther away.

The morning rampages carried no such presence with them; they seemed more tangible both in actuality and in purpose. I learned that after these rampages the trumpets were brought back to the Lelo River, just above where the men bathed, and immersed there during the daytime so that the women would not see them. One day there was a terrible storm and the Lelo rose four or five feet, transformed into a torrent. When the rain abated in the late afternoon Madyadya went to look for the trumpets and found that one of them had been washed away. This caused tremendous hilarity, though of course everyone tried to disguise what they were talking about in front of the women. The women, playing the same game, pretended not to

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765 791 magical act but a way of emphasizing that this is something in which every single member of the group must participate.

765 562 At first I had thought that the molimo was virtually the sole concern of the men. In the evenings, when the singing first started, there were sometimes a few girls who stood nearby and danced among themselves as we sang, but they were soon sent to join the rest of the women and children in their huts—certainly long before the molimo made its appearance. But one day I felt that something different was going on.

881 765 I had noticed that Kondabate, Manyalibo's daughter, who was married to Ausu, was building an extension at the back of her hut. She and Ausu had no children, and when I asked her why she was enlarging her home she said there was going to be an *elima*, and that all the girls would stay in her hut, under her care. An elima is a celebration that takes place when a girl reaches maturity, as marked by the first appearance of menstrual blood. At such a time she enters a special hut with her girl friends and stays there for a month. But I had heard none of the usual discussion about the event, and I felt this could not be the full answer.

765 574 888 Then, that afternoon, an old, old woman arrived with her husband. They stopped first in Cephu's camp, where they had relatives, but then came on into the main camp, where they were received with the greatest respect. The husband sat down at the kumamolimo and was offered food; the old woman disappeared into Kondabate's house. She stayed there until evening, but all I could hear from inside were occasional snatches of song. It was plain that there were several girls in there as well, and it sounded as though they were either being taught new songs or else rehearsing songs they already knew. They never sang more than a few bars at a time, and I was continually being startled, thinking that I heard something resembling one of the molimo songs.

765 888 That evening the old man joined us for the molimo singing. He

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was given special recognition by Moke, who offered him his chair and then sat on the ground beside him. Old Tungana seemed to know him well too. The elders—the *mangese*, the Great Ones—formed a tight cluster of their own, apart from the hunters. The hunters formed their own group, and the youths theirs. The youths and a few of the hunters danced, and we were surrounded by women and girls who watched and joined the songs with handclaps. The girls formed their own dance circles, but they seemed to be dancing with much more purpose than on other nights, and they were allowed to stay up much later. Then they were sent to bed, and the singing began in earnest. All the girls who had danced went into Kondabate's hut, and as they opened the leaf door to enter I saw that the old woman was sitting inside, hunched up over the fire, her eyes as bright as the coals, wide and unblinking.

The singing went on particularly late that night, and it was only an hour after Moke's usual statement that he was tired that we were awakened by the blasting of both molimo trumpets as they entered the camp. I got up hurriedly and saw that Kenge was already gone. At the door of my hut someone ran up in the dusk and pushed me back, telling me not to come out, it was too dangerous. Just as he said this, there was a tremendous blow on top of the hut, and the molimo swept by. It was surrounded by at least twenty youths, all, as far as I could see, carrying long branches with which they beat on the roofs and walls of every hut. They continued this for an hour, the trumpets blaring angrily, the youths making loud hunting cries. As the forest grew lighter I could see that all the youths were decorated with leafy branches stuck in their belts, so that it looked as though each trumpet was surrounded by a little forest of its own.

Quite a number of huts had been damaged, but there was no word of protest. Ekianga danced up and down with a spear under each arm and ran rings around the trumpets. I was more impressed than ever by the high-stepping gait that he and everyone else used. They did

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an empty basket at him and said, "There, you make so much noise, go and fill it yourself." Even before the hunt went off there were two full baskets hanging up, and by evening there were four.

The change between the atmosphere of the morning and that of the evening was unbelievable. Usually when a day starts off in such ill humor it continues in that way to the bitter end. But the hunt seemed to restore everyone's good spirits, even though it was not outstandingly successful. I did not go on the hunt, but stayed in camp. And all day long the girls were singing in Kondabate's house, and the old woman was with them.

After we had eaten the evening meal Manyalibo went around the camp himself and took a piece of wood from the fire outside each hut, placing them all on the molimo fire. Then, before it was completely dark, the men gathered to sing. Even Cephu was there, and the singing was light and cheerful. The girls that had been in Kondabate's hut came out as soon as we started. They had painted their bodies with black kangay juice, and in their hair they had twined circlets of vine, one strand of which stuck way out in front, over their foreheads, with a small bunch of feathers dangling from the end. They kept together in a tight little group, their bodies swaying in unison to the songs of the men. Then they began to dance, still so close together that I could not see between them. They danced all around the group, forcing us closer and closer to the fire. In a snaking, graceful line they seemed to take charge of the music, increasing the tempo until the men were as exhausted as they were, and we all stopped for a rest.

By then it was dark, and I expected the girls and the rest of the women and children to retire to their huts. But they had built a fire of their own at the edge of the molimo group, and there they all sat, chatting inconsequentially as though they did this every night. It was then that I first noticed the old woman. Under a great headdress of vine and feathers her hatchet face looked more angular than

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ever, thin and straight, with eyes still wide and unblinking and, it seemed, unseeing. She sat in the middle of the group, hugging her knees. Her skin sagged in withered folds, her bones stuck out in ugly lines and bumps. She made a strange contrast with the background of young feminine beauty and vitality. The only time she so much as moved was when Kondabate joined the group.

Kondabate, the belle with filed teeth and great diamond-shaped scarifications on her stomach; Kondabate the beauty, who after two years of married life still preserved her fine upstanding breasts and trim figure—but also Kondabate the childless. She had on a headdress like the old woman's, and her eyes, too, seemed unnaturally wide and staring. She was smiling and happy—until she sat down opposite the old lady. That was when the old woman moved, looking up from the fire into Kondabate's eyes. In an instant Kondabate seemed to lose her smile and her happiness. She became as empty as the withered old shell of a woman in front of her, and she sat as quietly, staring into the flickering flames.

After a while the men started singing again, but gently, and then with a shock I realized that the women were singing as well, the sacred songs of the molimo. And they were not just joining in, they were leading the singing. Songs that I had thought only the men knew and were allowed to sing—all of a sudden the women were showing that they not only knew them but could sing them with just as much intensity. Kondabate suddenly sprang up and seized the banja sticks from Kelemoke, and began beating the urgent molimo rhythm: *one* two, *one* two three, *one* two three. She beat the banja faster and faster, and I saw the old woman begin to twitch in every muscle. Kondabate was already half dancing, and it was as though she was passing the life and force from her body into the dried-up skinny old body in front of her. The old crone's legs started stamping up and down, and she sat back on her buttocks so that she could lift her feet higher. Then her arms began moving, pointing in

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this direction and that; even her fingers each seemed to have a dance of its own. But her head was still, and her eyes were fixed on those of Kondabate.

At this point Kondabate handed the banja to another of the women standing nearby and led the young girls right into the center of the men's group, dancing in a close circle around the molimo fire. As they moved around, the men stood up and made room for them, and now the singing came almost entirely from the women. The men just stood and stamped and clapped and growled a bass accompaniment. The girls danced more and more wildly, but their heads and eyes were always turned toward the molimo fire, no matter how violent the body movement. After nearly half an hour the old woman, still crouching, ran into the center after the girls, and turning to face them from the far side of the fire she drove them slowly backward, back until they were lost among the others at the edge of the group. The singing was quieter, and in a few minutes it faded away altogether. Not a word was spoken.

After a short rest the singing started again, and this time there was no mistaking it—the women were leading. Manyalibo's wife picked up the banja and beat them, sharply and decisively, and the girls began the song. The men followed in obedient chorus. Once again, as the song grew faster, the old woman began to twitch until her whole body was alive with movement. Then she sprang up and came into the center of the kumamolimo alone. For an instant she stood there, and her head moved sharply from side to side. It was like the movement of a bird, keeping a wary eye open for possible foes. As she began to dance she seemed to sink slowly into the ground, her knees folding up like a concertina, her body bending at the waist; but always her head stuck out in front, jerking from side to side, eyes staring and expressionless.

She circled the fire three times, looking out and upward into the night, but unseeing; then as if satisfied that she was alone and un-

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observed she flung her head and her whole body around and faced the fire directly. She was about seven or eight feet away from it. She advanced slowly and cautiously, two steps forward, one step back, her attention riveted on the flames. The singing was louder and faster, but she refused to be hurried. At her own pace she approached closer and closer until it seemed impossible that she could stand the heat. She hesitated at the brink of the fire, her frail body gleaming with sweat, her face glowing and trembling. She made as if she was going to pounce on the fire, but whirled around at the last moment and danced quickly back to where the women were singing, watching her, eagerly and anxiously. She sat down on her haunches and accepted a steaming bowl of liko.

The singing did not stop this time but went on quietly at a slower tempo. The men made no attempt to move back closer to the fire. After about ten minutes the old lady, apparently refreshed and as full of vigor as ever, danced back into the men's circle, with Kondabate at her side. Their movements were perfectly co-ordinated, even to the twitching of their heads; as they sank down close to the ground they might have been one person. But as they neared the fire, again having circled it several times, the old woman sprang to her feet and ran swiftly around to the far side and crouched there, staring at Kondabate through the flames. They started circling once more, each keeping her eyes on the other, moving from side to side so that they were always opposite each other. But now they were closer to the fire than they had ever been and on their hands and knees they passed through the hot ashes, as though trying to reach each other through the flames.

Finally Kondabate retreated and squatted down at the edge of the circle, her body twitching just as the old woman's had done, her eyes staring and empty as she gazed at the molimo fire. The men heaped more wood on the flames, which were beginning to die down. Now they were singing as loudly as the women, stamping on the

ground with their feet and dancing with their arms and bodies, but never moving from where they stood. The old woman grew taller and more upright. Her bent old frame straightened out and she stood proudly, arms at her side, bent at the elbows so that her hands were out in front. Those hands had a life of their own, pointing and gesticulating and dancing with infinite grace at the end of motionless arms. The old woman no longer looked from side to side. She knew she had nothing to fear now, that she was the victor. And when she stooped once more to approach the fire she did not stoop so low, and each step was a step forward. As the singing quickened so did her steps, until with a burst of frenzied shouting she was driven right into the flames.

She seemed to hover there an instant, that skinny old crone who should have been burned to a cinder in a flash. Then she whirled around and kicked out with her feet, scattering the sacred molimo fire in all directions. Blazing logs and glowing embers alike she scattered, right among the circle of men surrounding her. And then she danced away, erect and proud. The men, without even faltering in their song, quickly gathered all the scattered embers and threw them back onto the remaining coals, and then for the first time they moved in a dance of their own. They danced in a wild circle, and as they danced their bodies swayed backward and forward, facing the fire, as though by imitation of the act of generation they were giving the fire new life. And as they danced the flames slowly began to rise, and as they rose the men danced all the more violently, until they had brought the fire of the molimo back to life.

Twice more this happened. Each time the old woman made a more determined effort to stamp the fire out of existence. And each time the strangely beautiful and exciting erotic dance of the men gave it new life. Finally the old woman conceded defeat and retreated among the others. Shortly afterward all the women disappeared, and

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the men rearranged themselves at the kumamolimo without making any mention of what had happened.

I looked at Moke, and found him staring at me curiously. He understood my question and nodded. Yes, this was what he had told me I was yet to see.

There is an old legend that once it was the women who "owned" the molimo, but the men stole it from them and ever since the women have been forbidden to see it. Perhaps this was a way of reminding the men of the origin of their molimo. There is another old legend which tells that it was a woman who stole fire from the chimpanzees or, in yet another version, from the great forest spirit. Perhaps the dance had been in imitation of this. I did not understand it by any means, but somehow it seemed to make sense.

The woman is not discriminated against in BaMbuti society as she is in some African societies. She has a full and important role to play. There is relatively little specialization according to sex. Even the hunt is a joint effort. A man is not ashamed to pick mushrooms and nuts if he finds them, or to wash and clean a baby. A woman is free to take part in the discussions of men, if she has something relevant to say. In fact, it was the apparent absolute dominance of the male in the molimo that had seemed to be the exception.

But now even in this the woman had come into her own. She had asserted her prior claim to the fire of life, and her ability to destroy it, to extinguish life. Or had she been destroying it? Perhaps when she was kicking the fire out in all directions among the menfolk she was giving it to them, for them to gather and rebuild and revitalize with the dance of life.

I was trying to puzzle it all out when the singing started again, and I saw that the old woman had returned, alone. All the others were in their huts, and the men seemed to be singing as though by their song they could drive the last remaining female away. They sang louder and harder, but she kept circling the kumamolimo, keep-

62 571 561 [888] **Government.**—There are no chiefs, councils, or any other formal governing bodies in a pygmy camp. In making any decisions concerning the whole camp, two factors are involved. The first of these is respect for older people.

561 571 576 888 [626] A pygmy will always, in addressing a man of an older age group in any formal situation, call him "senior"; he will listen respectfully to an older man and will always obey any reasonable orders he may give. If a younger man shows disrespect, the other members of the camp will gang up on him and berate him. This respect for age, and for the opinions of wise old men, is the basis of pygmy government.

623 571 561 [888] Secondly, while the opinions of most of the old men are respected, every man in the camp is entitled to state his own views on any subject. Thus, during the evening talking time, the pygmies will discuss whether to move camp, where to move it, and why; or whether to go net hunting, and where to hunt. The discussion has no leader and may go on for several evenings. Finally the men who are shouting out different opinions will come to an agreement and the decision will be acted upon.

623 571 561 888 [828] [562] In general it is the older and more experienced men who make the decision, but as some of the old men are considered eccentrics and freaks, little attention is paid to them. Rather, it is an oligarchy of the more respected among the old men, a body with no formal membership or specific composition. In their decisions the pungent remarks of the women also have a considerable influence.

Pygmy Social Organization

594 **Families and their extensions.**—The smallest normal social unit in a pygmy camp is the individual biological

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